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**JAN 11 2007**

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**REMARKS**

Applicant thanks for the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application, but respectfully requests reconsideration of the objection and rejections raised in the Office Action for at least the reasons discussed below:

The drawings are objected to on the grounds they allegedly fail to illustrate every claimed feature of the present invention. Contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, however, the drawings do depict every feature of the claimed invention inasmuch as concave frustoconical flank 22 and the convex frustoconical flank shown in FIGS. 3 and 4 are actually cutaway views of the same connection means.

Although the surfaces 22 and 23 are properly represented as being straight in FIGS. 3A and 4, these straight lines depict cross-sections of curved surfaces, one concave and the other convex. Thus, the recited concave and convex frustoconical surfaces are shown in the drawings, and the objection should be withdrawn.

With respect to the abstract, it is noted that the Preliminary Amendment filed with the present application on March 3, 2005, included a substitute abstract that complies with all USPTO requirements and includes none of the language indicated to be objectionable in the Office Action.

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Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. It is alleged in the Office Action that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the expression "the above-specified angle". In fact, claims 6 and 7 refer to the same angle, and claim 7 is amended accordingly. Minor changes are also made to claims 5, 6, and 8 for consistency and consistent with preferred U.S. format. In view of the foregoing, the §112 rejection should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration is requested of the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Goodwin (U.S. 3,177,018). At the outset, it is noted that claims 1-3 were cancelled by Preliminary Amendment in favor of added claims 5-8. As a result, reasons why the §102 rejection should be withdrawn are discussed with respect to the pending claims.

Goodwin discloses connection means including a coupling defining an internal channel provided with an inner groove 66 receiving an annularly shaped retaining element 84. The inner groove has a first concave frustoconical flank 71 and a second **concave** frustoconical flank (see the angular face above and to the right of reference numeral 70 in FIG. 4). Thus, inner groove 66 has **two concave** frustoconical flanks and **no convex** frustoconical flank.

In the presently claimed invention, the convex frustoconical flank facilitates elastic expansion of the retaining element because,

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when the retaining element is pushed against the convex frustoconical flank, the convex frustoconical flank tends to penetrate and expand the retaining element.

In contrast, the Goodwin concave frustoconical flanks tend to radially retract the retaining element when the retaining element presses against the concave frustoconical flank. Accordingly, the Goodwin groove is different from that claimed herein. Since Goodwin does not disclose each and every feature of the presently claimed invention, it cannot anticipate the subject matter of Applicant's pending claims. Hence, the rejection of cancelled claims 1-3 should be withdrawn and not levied against claims 5-7.

Finally, reconsideration is requested of the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Goodwin in view of EP 615 089. Claim 8 is allowable due to its dependence on allowable independent claim 5, as well as for the additional limitations provided by the claim. Goodwin, as already explained, fails to anticipate Applicant's claimed subject matter, and EP '089 fails to remedy the deficiencies of Goodwin as a primary reference. A *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 8 has not been established, and the §103 rejection should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that Goodwin, taken alone or in combination with EP 615 089, does not anticipate or

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disclose the subject matter of amended claims 5-8. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

If there are any outstanding issues that can be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned at 703-521-2297 in an effort to expedite prosecution.

To the extent necessary during prosecution, Applicant hereby requests any required extension of the time not otherwise requested and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any prescribed fee not otherwise paid, including application processing, extension, and extra claims fees, to Deposit Account No. 25-0120.

Respectfully submitted,

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Roseanna Kaplan

